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PROCEEDINGS
OF
THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.

[ISSUED 28TH APRIL, 1864.]

SESSION 1863-64.

Sixth Meeting, 8th February, 1864.

SIR RODERICK I. MURCHISON, K.C.B., PRESIDENT, in the Chair.

PRESENTATIONS.—*Revs. G. P. Badger and J. J. Mercier, John Kempster and G. Clowes, Esqrs.*

ELECTIONS.—*Rev. G. P. Badger; J. Cockfield Dimsdale, Esq.; Sir Frederick Halliday, K.C.B.; Gavin Hardie; Charles Savile Roundell; Edmund Trimmer; and Henry Weguelin, Esqrs.*

ACCESSIONS TO LIBRARY.—‘The Cotton Trade; its bearing upon the Prosperity of Great Britain and Commerce of the American Republics, considered in connection with the System of Negro Slavery in the Confederate States;’ by George McHenry. ‘Narrative of Canadian Exploring Expeditions,’ by Professor W. Y. Hind; presented by the Author. Continuations of ‘Transactions,’ &c.

ACCESSIONS TO MAP-ROOM since last Meeting (Jan. 25).—Sources of the Nile, by Captains Speke and Grant; 8 sheets, MS. Mapa Topografico de la Altiplanicie Central de Bolivia, by Hugo Reck; 1862. New Zealand—Province of Canterbury, showing the Glaciers and Alpine range, illustrated by 12 large-sized Drawings by Dr. Haast, P.G. New Zealand—showing the Seat of War, Auckland; published by the Editors of the ‘Daily Southern Cross,’ New Zealand. Ancient Map of Africa, preserved in the British Museum, presented by his Excellency Conde de Lavradio. Die Britischen Inseln und das Umliegende Meer; by A. Petermann. Special-Karte Süd-Schleswig; by A. Petermann. Plan of the District around Shanghai, under the protection of the Allied Forces (2 copies); presented by the War Office, through Sir E. Lugard, K.C.B. Continuation of Ordnance Maps and Admiralty Charts.

EXHIBITIONS.—Twelve chromo-lithographs of glacier and other Views in the Southern Alps of Middle Island, New Zealand, to

illustrate Dr. Haast's Paper; from water-colour sketches taken on the spot.

Previous to reading the first Paper of the evening, the PRESIDENT called attention to the series of the above-mentioned beautiful chromo-lithograph views of the mountain-scenery of New Zealand, after which

The first Paper, which was entitled "*On the Southern Alps of Canterbury, Middle Island, New Zealand*," by Dr. HAAST, Provincial Geologist, was read, in which the author briefly summarized the results of his numerous surveys during the years 1861-62-63. This magnificent snow-clad range, from which descend enormous glaciers, reaches in this province its greatest elevation, forming the culminating point of the great back-bone that runs through both islands from north-east to south-west, which is only broken through at Cook's Straits, and rises in the North Island to peaks almost as lofty, such as the well-known cone of Mount Egmont. The pyramidal form is everywhere the marked feature of the huge masses, numbers of which exceed 10,000 feet in height; while Mount Cook, the highest summit of all, is 12,460 feet, and about 30 miles from the west coast. Between each mountain-system, as it were (some of which, however run for many miles without any traces of a *col*), occurs a pass of varying altitude, generally very inaccessible, some as high as 6500 feet to about 8000 feet; and these intervening depressions form the watershed of rapid and formidable mountain-torrents which fall into the ocean on the west coast. The eastern flanks are drained in like manner by glacier-streams, which, however, having a longer distance to run ere reaching the east coast, and encountering huge lakes which regulate their flow to some extent, make this side of the range eminently suitable for an emigration-field. Nothing can exceed the beauty of the tints both of sky and vegetation, or the singular glacial anomalies that present themselves on some of the glaciers; as, for instance, that of the River Godley, which has two waterfalls falling from its eastern edge into two deep gorges, only separated by a buttress of rock, as depicted in one of the spirited sketches made on the spot, which were exhibited at the Meeting. Between Mount Cook and Mount Stokes (in immediate proximity and almost as lofty as the former) there is a deep very abrupt cleft, as it were, constituting a *col* about 7000 feet above sea-level; beyond which the chain again rises, but is now bifurcated as it proceeds south-west, till a singular gap or break occurs—not above 1000 feet high, with a swamp on the summit, emptying in both directions, and presenting physical features which, it is believed, are without a parallel in any other portion of the globe—through which alone it is possible to reach the west coast from the